

**Case 3690*****Alabina* Dall, 1902 (Gastropoda, CERITHIOIDEA): proposed designation of the type species**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this application, under Articles 65.2.2 and 70.2 of the Code, is to fix *Alaba cerithioides* Dall, 1889 as type species of *Alabina*, as originally intended by Dall. *Alabina* Dall, 1902 (Gastropoda), is a replacement name for *Elachista* Dall & Simpson, 1901, non *Elachista* Treitschke, 1833 (Insecta). The name *Elachista* was introduced inadvertently a few weeks before its intended publication, with the consequence that its type species by monotypy is *Bittium californicum* Dall & Bartsch, 1901. Dall had intended it to be *Alaba cerithioides* Dall, 1889, and he cited that species as type of *Alabina* in several publications. *Bittium californicum* Dall & Bartsch, 1901, and *Alaba cerithioides* Dall, 1889, are not congeneric and not even confamilial.

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; ALABINIDAE; *Alabina*; *Alaba cerithioides*; gastropods; western Atlantic.

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1. Dall & Bartsch (1901 [3 September], p. 58) described *Bittium (Elachista) californicum* spec. nov. from the Pleistocene and (supposedly) Recent marine fauna of California. Although *Elachista* is not declared new and is not diagnosed separately, it appears in this work for the first time, and the combined subgenus and species description confer availability to both names.

2. A few weeks later, Dall & Simpson (1901 [November]) treated ‘*Elachista* Dall, 1901’ as a section heading, under the subgenus *Diastoma* of the genus *Bittium*. There, *Elachista* is diagnosed and the authors state: ‘The type may be taken as *B. cerithioides* Dall (Trans. Wagner Inst., III, p. 276, pl. xvi, fig. 8, 1892)’. Despite the reference to Dall’s (1892) illustration of a fossil from the Miocene of Jamaica, this designates *Alaba cerithioides* Dall, 1889, a species described from the Recent fauna of [Cape] ‘Hatteras southward’, on the eastern coast of the United States.

3. The molluscan name *Elachista* Dall, 1901 is a junior homonym of *Elachista* Treitschke, 1833 (Lepidoptera). Dall (1902, p. 127) recognized the homonymy and for ‘*Elachista* Dall and Simpson’ he established the substitute name *Alabina*. On this



occasion, he repeated that this ‘peculiar group of *Bittium* [is] typified by *B. cerithidioide* Dall’. Incidentally, the name *Elachista* Treitschke, 1833 was placed on the Official List of Genus-Group Names in Zoology by Opinion 1557 (BZN 46: 206–207; September 1989).

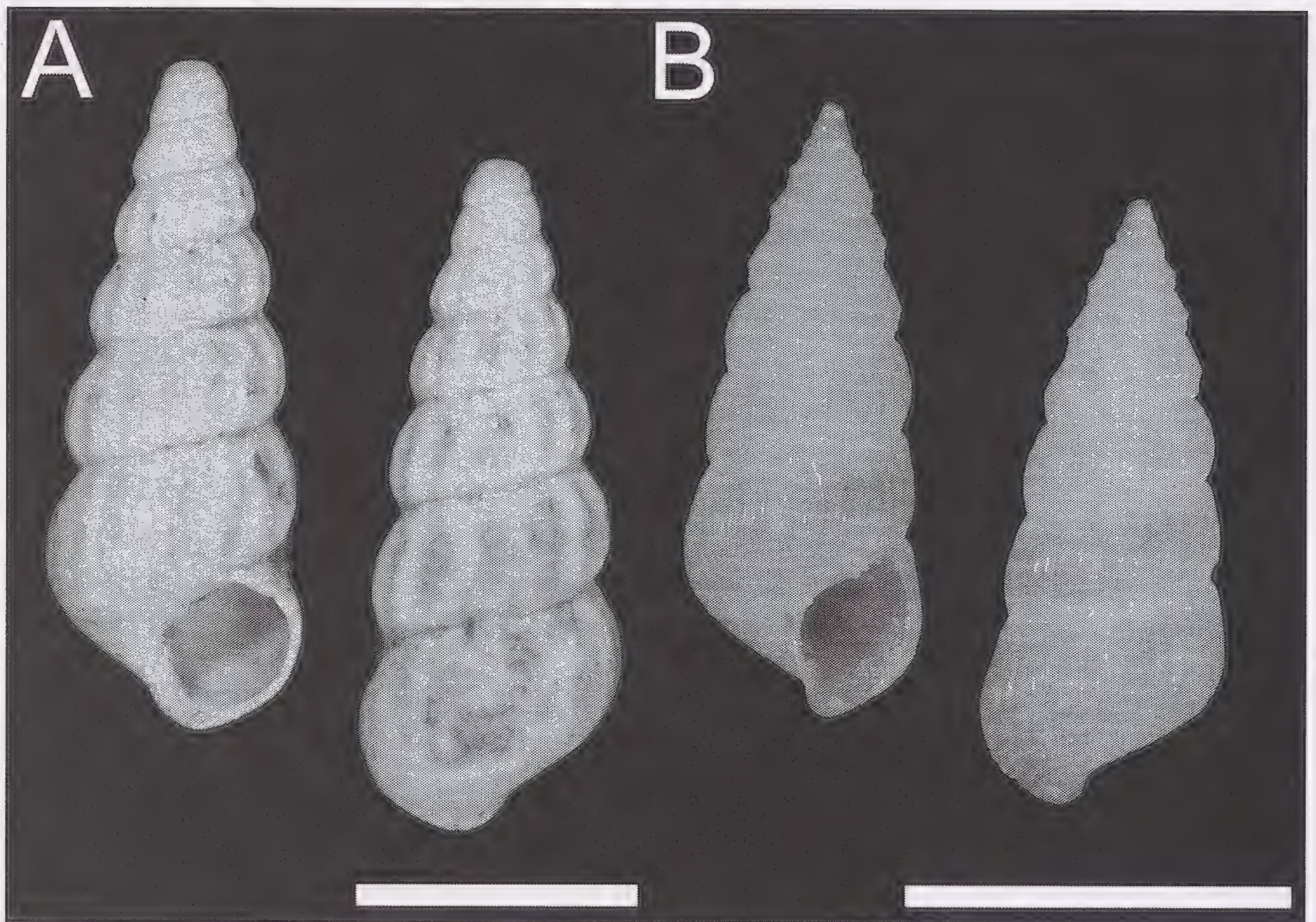
4. Dall (1922) later synonymised *Alabina* with *Finella* A. Adams, 1860: ‘The fortunate discovery in the collection of the National Museum of specimens of Adams’ typical species [i.e. *Finella pupoides* A. Adams, 1860, type species of *Finella* by monotypy] received from him many years ago, has enabled me to positively identify *Finella* (sic) and *Alabina* described by me in 1902’. Notwithstanding, Dall (1927) established the family ALABINIDAE, based on *Alabina*, at that occasion citing explicitly ‘*Bittium cerithidioide* Dall’ as type species.

5. Woodring (1928, pp. 338–339) accepted Dall’s synonymization of *Alabina* with *Finella*, but he (incorrectly) regarded the latter as an incorrect original spelling of *Fenella*, itself a junior homonym of *Fenella* Westwood, 1840 (Hymenoptera), and he thus used *Alabina* as a valid name, citing *Bittium cerithidioide* as type. In line with this earlier treatment of *Alabina*, Woodring (in Woodring et al. 1946, p. 68; name attributed to Woodring alone on p. 61) later established a new genus-group name *Elassum* with this comment: ‘The new generic name *Elassum* is proposed for ‘*Bittium* (*Elachista*)’ *californicum* (pl. 29, fig. 21). The preoccupied name *Elachista* was used inadvertently for that species. It is not congeneric with the Floridian and West Indian ‘*Bittium*’ *cerithidioide*, which was intended as the type of *Elachista* and is the type of *Alabina*, proposed as a substitute for *Elachista*.’

6. The taxonomy of small cerithioids is still extremely confused, and this taxonomical confusion is exacerbated by the nomenclatural instability caused by uncertainty about the type species of *Alabina*. What is certain, however, is that *Alaba cerithioides* Dall, 1889, and *Bittium californicum* Dall & Bartsch, 1901 (Fig. 1), are not congeneric and not even confamilial. *Alaba cerithioides* is now considered to be a junior synonym of *Finella dubia* (d’Orbigny, 1840) in the family SCALIOLIDAE [formerly OBTORTIONIDAE], a synonymy that has been accepted in authoritative catalogues (e.g. Abbott, 1974, p. 108) and modern databases (e.g. Rosenberg, 2009; WoRMS 2015). Accordingly, *Alabina* is not in current use for western Atlantic species. Starting with Gripp (1909) and Bartsch (1911), *Bittium californicum* has been placed in *Alabina* by many authors working on East Pacific faunas, including Keen (1971), which remains the classic reference for the Panamic fauna, and has influenced to this day (e.g. Perilliat & Flores-Guerrero, 2011) acceptance of *Alabina*. Alternatively, *Bittium californicum* has been treated as a species of *Finella* by Abbott (1974, p. 108), followed by Turgeon et al. (1998) and at least one database (ITIS). However, Woodring et al. (1946) and J. McLean (pers. comm.) treated *Elassum californicum* as a species in the family CERITHIIDAE, an opinion with which we concur. Apart from *californicum*, the name *Alabina* as currently used for the East Pacific fauna includes species belonging to both families, including CERITHIIDAE (e.g. *Alabina calena* Dall, 1919), but mostly SCALIOLIDAE (e.g. *Alabina excurvata* (Carpenter, 1857), *A. ignati* Bartsch, 1911), based on examination of types held in the USNM.

7. Although the family name ALABINIDAE is based on a type genus with an overlooked type species designation, stability at the family level is not at stake: in the last decades, the subfamily ALABININAE was recognized as valid only by Ponder & Warén (1988, as a subfamily of CERITHIIDAE; an opinion continued by Ponder &





**Fig. 1.** A. *Bittium californicum* Dall & Bartsch, 1901. Figured holotype. USNM 162548. Dead Man's Island, San Pedro, California; B. *Alaba cerithioides* Dall, 1889. Syntype. USNM 92725. U.S. Fisheries Commission. R/V Albatross, Stn 2619. North Carolina, S.E. from Cape Fear.

Bouchet, *in* Bouchet & Rocroi, 2005) and by Bandel (2006, as a subfamily of BITTIIDAE). Ponder & Warén did not state which species they considered the type of *Alabina*, but Bandel explicitly referred to '*Alabina cerithioides* [sic] (= *Finella dubia*)'. When *Alaba cerithioides* is regarded as the type species of *Alabina*, ALABININAE is a junior subjective synonym of SCALIOLIDAE and OBTORTIONIDAE, and thus unlikely ever to be used; when *Bittium californicum* is regarded as the type species of *Alabina*, ALABININAE is a junior subjective synonym of BITTIINAE and also unlikely ever to be used.

8. However, clarity and unambiguity are at stake at the genus level, because *Alaba cerithioides* Dall, 1889, and *Bittium californicum* Dall & Bartsch, 1901, are not congeneric and not even confamilial. There can be no doubt that Dall's original intention had been to establish *Elachista*, and thus *Alabina*, with *Alaba cerithioides* Dall, 1889, as type species. However, the earlier and certainly unforeseen, publication of the description of *Bittium (Elachista) californicum* Dall & Bartsch, 1901, formally made *Bittium californicum* the type species of *Elachista* by monotypy, and has been overlooked by most authors. Other than Houbriek (1993), who accepted *Bittium californicum* as the type species of *Elachista* and *Alabina* (and thus *Elassum* as an objective synonym), all 20th century authors, including Dall himself, have treated *Alaba cerithioides* as the type species of *Alabina*. This includes the influential textbooks by Thiele (1929, p. 211) and Wenz (1940, p. 751). The fixation of *Alaba cerithioides* as the type species of *Alabina* would leave *Elassum* as a potentially valid name for East Pacific species. The alternative (accepting the inadvertent fixation of



*Bittium californicum* as type species of *Alabina*) would perpetuate the use of a name with its historical burden of confusion: most species currently accepted as valid in *Alabina* are in fact neither congeneric nor confamilial with *Bittium californicum*, and would not remain classified in *Alabina* regardless. Because the case can be solved only by a Commission's ruling under the plenary power, it is brought to the Commission under Articles 65.2.2 and 70.2.

9. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to set aside all fixations of type species for *Alabina* Dall, 1902 prior to designation of *Alaba cerithidioides* Dall, 1889 by Dall (1902);
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
  - (a) *Alabina* Dall, 1902 (gender: feminine), type species *Alaba cerithidioides* Dall, 1889, as ruled in (1) above;
  - (b) *Elassum* Woodring, 1946 (gender: neuter), type species *Bittium californicum* Dall & Bartsch, 1901 by original designation;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *Alaba cerithidioides* Dall, 1889, type species of *Alabina* Dall, 1902;
- (4) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology the name *Elachista* Dall & Simpson, 1901, which is permanently invalid as a junior homonym of *Elachista* Treitschke, 1833.

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